CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A system for enhancing price discovery of products available in electronic commerce, wherein said system comprises:

one or more automated surveyors for surveying a plurality of: posted prices, bid prices, posted quotes, quoted prices, and auctions;

an anonymous buyer profile, said anonymous buyer profile used multiple times to develop historical usage thereof, said historical usage representing a sophisticated buyer and included within at least one of said one or more automated surveyors, said sophisticated buyer used as the buyer by said automated surveyors, and

wherein use of said anonymous buyer profile increases the probability of discovering the best prices in an electronic commerce environment which includes electronic price discrimination.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein said developed anonymous buyer profile is used to make actual purchases for a buyer using said system without disclosing the true identity of said buyer.

4. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 3, wherein when said system makes actual purchases for a buyer it further includes: receiving purchased at least one item at a site owned by system operator or a third party, and

shipping at least item to said buyer.

5. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein said surveying posted prices further comprises:

collecting information about wholesale prices;

generating reference points, and

assessing from said reference points whether a posted price is reasonable.

6. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein said surveying posted quotes further comprises:

scanning continuously commercial sites on a network;

extracting posted quotes from said sites;

maintaining a database of posted quotes, and

pointing a buyer to vendors that post a best price based on said posted quotes for an item the buyer is interested in.

7. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein said

included within at least one of said one or more automated surveyors comprises:

choosing one of a plurality of available fictitious names;

requesting price quotes on behalf of said chosen fictitious names;

storing all received quotes, and

maintaining statistics about said stored received quotes for reference to future buyers using said system.

8. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein said system further comprises:

promoting competition among sellers by:

generating messages to inform sellers of lower prices quoted by their competitors;

advising said sellers to consider lowering prices, and

maintaining a website, for public viewing, regarding ratings of sellers.

9. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein potential buyers receive messages of prices discovered by any of: e-mail, regular mail, or faxes.

10. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein said method of uncovering price structures further comprises:

probing a commercial site with varying parameters associated with the price of at least one product;

uncovering the underlying fee structure and how it varies with respect to different parameters, and

suggesting to a potential buyer what parameters can be changed to save money.

11. (Original) A system for enhancing price discovery in electronic commerce, as per claim 1, wherein said network includes any of the: Internet, WWW, wireless web, LAN or WAN.

12. (Previously Presented) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce, wherein said method comprises:

electronically presenting information to sellers located across a network about sophisticated buyers who are not willing to pay more than a minimum price, said sophisticated buyers developed by historical use of anonymous buyer profiles;

using said sophisticated buyers to electronically gather information about prices on a network, and

indicating to sellers when they are competitive, and influencing them to lower prices.

13. (Original) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce, as per claim 12, wherein said influencing them to lower prices comprises any of:

generating messages to inform sellers of lower prices quoted by their competitors;

advising said sellers to consider lowering prices, and

maintaining a website, for public viewing, regarding ratings of sellers.

14. (Original) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce, as per claim 12, wherein said sophisticated buyers are used to anonymously make actual purchases for a buyer using said method.

15. (Original) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce, as per claim 14, wherein when said method anonymously makes actual purchases for a buyer it further includes: receiving purchased item(s) at a site owned by system operator or a third party, and

shipping item(s) to said buyer.

16. (Original) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce, according to claim 12, wherein said network includes one of the: Internet, WWW, wireless web, LAN or WAN.

17 – 20 (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce

comprising:

surveying quoted prices located across a network, comprising the steps of:

 generating fictitious user names;

requesting price quotes using said fictitious name(s);

 building reputation of said fictitious name(s) as sophisticated buyer(s);

 continuously scanning commercial sites on a network using said sophisticated buyers to

retrieve product price information, including at least quotes;

 generating statistical distribution of said quotes, and

 comparing a quote a known buyer receives to what has been observed in the system by

the sophisticated buyer.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic

commerce, according to claim 21, wherein said known buyer's anonymity is protected comprises

the steps of:

 providing buyer the option of purchasing item(s) for him;

 purchasing the item(s) using one of many said available fictitious names;

 receiving item(s) at a site owned by system operator, and

 shipping item(s) to buyer.

24. (Previously Presented) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce,

according to claim 21, further comprising promoting competition among sellers comprising the

steps of:

generating messages to inform sellers of lower prices quoted by their competitors;

advising said sellers to consider lowering prices, and

maintaining a website, for public viewing, regarding ratings of sellers.

25. (Original) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce, according to claim 24, wherein said messages generated include one of the following: e-mail, regular mail, or faxes.

26. (Previously Presented) A method for enhancing buyers performance in electronic commerce, according to claim 21, further comprising a method of uncovering price structures by:

probing a commercial site with varying parameters associated with the price of at least one product;

uncovering the underlying fee structure and how it varies with respect to different parameters, and

suggesting to the buyer what parameters can be changed to save money.

27. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture comprising a computer user medium having computer readable program code embodied therein which enhances buyers performance in electronic commerce, said system comprising:

computer readable code comprising one or more automated surveyors for surveying any of: posted prices, bid prices, posted quotes, quoted prices, and auctions;

computer readable code comprising an anonymous buyer profile used multiple times to develop historical usage thereof, said historical usage representing a sophisticated buyer and included within at least one of said one or more automated surveyors, said sophisticated buyer used as the buyer by said automated surveyors, and

wherein use of said anonymous buyer profile increases the probability of discovering the best prices in an electronic commerce environment which includes electronic price discrimination.

28. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture comprising a computer user medium having computer readable program code embodied therein which enhances buyers performance in electronic commerce, according to claim 27, wherein code for said automated surveyors using said one or more anonymous buyer profiles further comprises computer code for:

concealing a buyer's true identity;

picking one of many available fictitious names;

requesting price quotes on behalf of a buyer without revealing the buyer's true identity;

storing all received quotes, and

maintaining statistics about said stored received quotes for reference of future buyers.